

Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY): 9 Years of Empowerment

Introduction

Launched in May 2016, the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY) aims to provide clean cooking fuel (LPG) to poor households, especially women, thus promoting health, dignity, and gender empowerment.

Key Objectives

- Provide LPG connections to Below Poverty Line (BPL) families.
- Reduce health hazards from traditional biomass fuels.
- Empower women by improving access to clean cooking energy.
- Reduce air pollution and associated environmental harm.



Major Achievements

- Over **10 crore LPG connections** have been distributed in 9 years.
- Significant reduction in the use of firewood and traditional fuels.
- Improved health outcomes due to decreased indoor air pollution.
- Increase in LPG coverage from around 62% in 2016 to over 99% today.
- Expansion to include migrant workers and urban poor under **Ujjwala 2.0**.
- **PMUY 2.0**: Over **1.6 crore new beneficiaries** added with Aadhaar-based e-KYC and digital onboarding, including migrant workers.
- Total number of LPG distributors increased from 13896 in 2014 to 25481 in 2024, making an 83% growth.

Economic and Environmental Impacts

- **Reduced Biomass Use**: NSSO and TERI data suggest a **15–20% decline** in household dependence on traditional fuels post-PMUY.
- **Carbon Emission Reduction**: LPG usage has cut down significant **black carbon** emissions, contributing to India's **INDC targets** under the Paris Agreement.
- **Employment Generation**: Boosted rural employment via expansion of LPG distribution network (approx. **13,000+ new distributorships** added).

Challenges

- **Sustained usage** remains a concern; many households revert to traditional fuels due to high LPG refill costs.
- Inadequate last-mile connectivity in remote and tribal areas.
- Behavioral inertia and cultural preferences still influence fuel choice.

Way Ahead

- **Subsidy rationalization** and targeted refill support for poorer households.
- **Awareness campaigns** to promote health and environmental benefits of LPG.
- **Strengthening infrastructure** to improve distribution and accessibility.
- Incentivize **sustained usage** through community engagement and local support networks.

Conclusion

After nine years, PMUY stands as a transformative welfare initiative, contributing to women's empowerment, public health, and environmental protection. While its reach is commendable, focus must now shift to ensuring sustained adoption and affordability, bridging the gap between access and effective usage.



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